

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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KULT FUNKTION x HOUSE ELEGANZA, THEATER ROTTERDAM

Preface

Rotterdam is a city built on boldness, rhythm, and diversity.

This attitude forms the foundation of Kult Funktion's way of working. Where infrastructures like De Hef quite literally connect districts and people, Kult Funktion in 2025 built a cultural bridge for makers and communities who remain structurally less visible within the electronic music industry, with a strong focus on LGBTQI+, BIPOC, and female creators.

House and Techno are not only forms of electronic music, but also cultural practices. They emerged in the 1970s and 1980s within Black and LGBTQI+ communities in cities such as Chicago and Detroit, as a response to social and institutional exclusion. In that context, music functioned as a shared language in which safety, freedom, and ownership came together. From clubs and communities, House and Techno developed into global movements that today form the foundation of a large part of the electronic music industry.

At the same time, the structures that led to exclusion continue to persist and still determine who gains access to stages, networks, and professional development. Growth within the electronic music industry is rarely determined by quality alone. Access to knowledge, networks, and space remains decisive. In today's climate, hard-won progress is once again under pressure, and mechanisms of exclusion are re-emerging, although in different forms and language. The conditions from which House and Techno historically emerged are therefore once again tangible.

It is from this understanding that Kult Funktion was founded. In 2025, the focus was on building and anchoring. We consciously chose a phased approach in which building, testing, and reflecting were central. Not everything at once, and never beyond what the organization could sustain. This method allowed us to remain sharp on quality, to enter collaborations with care, and to learn from practice.


Our artistic vision serves as a compass. We approach House as a cultural system, rooted in self-organization, knowledge sharing, and community. This heritage requires care and a contemporary translation that does justice to both its origins and its future.

The year 2025 was defined by governance, clarity, and foundation. We chose clear roles, accountable decisions, and collaborations with structural value, adjusting where necessary. This annual report marks the end of the building phase and serves as the starting point for controlled scaling, while maintaining artistic and organizational integrity.

Kult Funktion is the result of something that extends beyond vision or policy, and exists thanks to people who were willing to share time, trust, and responsibility. We thank everyone who has carried this process, both visibly and behind the scenes.

On behalf of the entire board and organization,

Juliana Aparecida Bruinsma
Founder & Creative Director



2. Profile of the foundation Kult Funktion

Stichting Kult Funktion is an independent cultural organization in Rotterdam working towards a sustainable infrastructure for electronic music and club culture. Its focus lies on talent development, community building, and progression, with particular attention to creators who structurally have less access to space, resources, and professional networks within the city.

Kult Funktion's approach is aimed at developing cohesive learning and practice structures. Access to knowledge, guidance, and professional context within the electronic music industry is unevenly distributed and often fragmented. By creating structured development environments, Kult Funktion contributes to the sustainable growth of talent.

Kult Funktion connects local practice with a broader context. The organization collaborates with educational institutions, cultural venues, and social partners in Rotterdam, while also maintaining an international network that contributes to knowledge exchange and professional progression.

Core Values of the foundation Kult Funktion

- **Equal access**
Kult Funktion works towards a field in which creators have equal access to space, resources, and decision-making. Not symbolically, but structurally, by creating conditions in which quality can grow without dependence on informal networks.
- **Access to knowledge and practice**
Development requires more than visibility. That is why Kult Funktion facilitates access to knowledge, professional context, and practical experience, enabling creators to gain agency within the industry.
- **Collectivity over competition**
House culture is built on community. Kult Funktion stimulates collaboration, mentorship, and knowledge sharing over individual competition, thereby strengthening the collective ecosystem.
- **Representation with responsibility**
Visibility gains meaning when it contributes to structural change. Kult Funktion approaches representation not as an end goal, but as a means to distribute agency, knowledge, and opportunities more equitably

Field of Activity

Kult Funktion operates at the intersection of:

- Electronic music and club culture.
- Talent development and education.
- Community building and well-being.
- Knowledge sharing and network development.

Framework of Concepts

Makers

Makers are emerging talents within the electronic music industry. This includes up-and-coming DJs, producers, performers, and other creative professionals who are still positioning themselves within the field. They are often self-taught and operate outside of formal development structures.

Talent

Within the founding Kult Funktion, talent is understood as developmental potential. This potential can only unfold sustainably when access to space, guidance, knowledge, and professional networks is structurally organized.

Professionals

Professionals are experienced creators and experts with an established practice. They contribute to knowledge transfer, coaching, and network development, and play a key role in the progression of makers within the cultural ecosystem.

House culture

In this annual report, the terms house culture and house heritage refer to the same cultural practice and are used consistently in this form.

Target group

The primary target group consists of makers within electronic music and related disciplines in Rotterdam, with specific attention to LGBTQI+, BIPOC, and female creators who have less access to professional networks and development opportunities. In addition, collaborations take place with educational institutions, cultural organizations, and social partners that contribute to sustainable talent development and structural embedding within the urban cultural field.

Working method

Projects are developed from a long-term vision. Activities are part of a cohesive approach in which learning, practice, and network development reinforce one another. By connecting club culture with education, venues, and social organizations, development formats emerge that support growth, knowledge retention, and professional progression.

Positioning

Within Rotterdam's cultural landscape, the organization operates as an infrastructure. The focus lies on creating the conditions for development, including access to space, guidance, professional context, and networks. From a strong local foundation, the Rotterdam practice is connected to national and international exchange, contributing to a resilient and future-oriented cultural ecosystem.

Governance, Code of Culture and Fair Practice

The organization operates in accordance with the Governance Code Culture, the Fair Practice Code, and the Code Diversity & Inclusion. In 2025, these codes were translated into concrete working methods, with clear role distribution, transparent agreements, and fair compensation within available resources. Across all activities, consistent attention has been given to social safety, accessibility, and well-being, supported by designated contact points and a confidential advisor.

3. House Heritage & Context

Electronic music, and house in particular, emerged outside existing institutions as a social response to exclusion. Black and queer communities in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York built their own infrastructures through clubs, networks, and informal learning systems, where music functioned as a means of expression, safety, and knowledge transfer.

This origin explains why questions around access, agency, and collectivity remain central within the electronic music industry, a sector that has grown into a global economic system in which cultural value is widely utilized, while the originating communities remain structurally underrepresented in positions of power and professional progression.

Rotterdam context

Rotterdam has a strong tradition of electronic music and nightlife culture, shaped by migration and self-organization. This infrastructure is under pressure due to the disappearance of clubs, the decline of development spaces, and fragmented talent development. As a result, progression for makers without established network access remains uncertain. Within this urban reality, there is a growing need for organizations that not only program, but invest in sustainable structures in which development and knowledge are secured.

House Heritage as a compass

House Heritage is approached as both a conceptual and ethical framework guiding collaboration, organization, and programming, with an emphasis on collectivity, autonomy, and care. In line with international heritage perspectives, house is understood as a living culture, carried by communities and dependent on active transmission. In practice, this means that learning and doing are closely connected, knowledge and experience are actively shared, and development environments are intentionally designed to be safe and accessible. Power dynamics are explicitly acknowledged, ensuring that house heritage not only remains visible, but can be sustainably passed on.

Relevance for 2025

In 2025, this context formed the foundation of all our work: translating the core values of house, collectivity, transmission, and self-determination, into contemporary development structures that align with the Rotterdam reality, where space for talent, nightlife culture, and community building is becoming increasingly less self-evident.

4. Programming 2025

In 2025, the founding Kult Funktion realized a year-round program consisting of more than twenty public, educational, and professional activities. The programming took place in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and at national festivals, and was carried out in collaboration with cultural, social, and educational partners. The activities can be divided into four categories:

1. Education & outreach.
2. Talent stages
3. Community club hosting.
4. Festival programming.

Overview of activities 2025

Education & outreach

- Lectures and Q&A sessions within higher education, including Leisure Management.
- Panels and in-depth conversations in Pride and nightlife contexts.
- Jury and advisory roles within talent development programs.

Talent stages

- Talent stages within club nights and festivals.
- Guided stage experience for emerging DJs and creatives.
- A combination of performance, production experience, and professional guidance.

Community club hosting

- Recurring club nights and community events.
- Programming in which professional artists and emerging talent shared the stage.
- Safe and accessible settings with explicit attention to representation and social safety.

Festival programming

- Talent and community programming within large-scale festivals.
- Visibility for queer and BIPOC creators beyond their own scene.
- Doorstroom naar contexten met een breder publiek en professioneel netwerk.

Capacity & scale

- 35 unique talents active within the annual program.
- 17 professionals and coaches involved in guidance, curation, and execution.
- 20 volunteers and crew members engaged in production, support, and advisory roles.
- Activities collectively reached over 4,000 visitors, participants, and students.

Executive Team

- Project leader.
- Creative director.
- Marketeer.
- Back Office & Finance.
- LGBTQI+ Community-worker.
- Graphic designer.
- Videographer.
- Photographer.

Character of the programming

All activities were part of one cohesive annual program and were directly connected to the broader development ambitions of Stichting Kult Funktion. The 2025 programming was characterized by:

- Recurrent formats rather than one-off interventions.
- Variation in scale, ranging from small-scale education to large-scale festivals.
- Distribution across different contexts, including education, clubs, festivals, and community settings.

Collaborative partners 2025

Education & knowledge

- Willem de Kooning Academie WDKA Rotterdam.
- Kunstbende Rotterdam.

Venues, panels & clubs

- WORM Rotterdam.
- BRET.
- Perron Rotterdam.
- MA'DAM a'dam Toren.
- SIR A'dam Toren.
- Toy Tonics Berlin.
- Nhow Hotel.

Festivals & large-scale events

- Zwarte Cross Festival.
- Holland Festival.
- Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE).

Social & cultural organizations

- PLAN International
- Amsterdam Pride.
- N8W8 Rotterdam
- The Diverse Agency.
- Rotterdam Pride.

Cultural heritage & public space

- Homomonument Amsterdam.

Outlook: Collaborations 2026

- Club Export Rotterdam.
- Wereldmuseum Rotterdam.
- Amsterdam Dance Event.
- PLAN International.
- Laurenskerk Rotterdam.
- De Doelen Rotterdam.
- Café DOX Rotterdam.
- Zwarte Cross Festival.
- Rotterdam Pride.

5. Program lines in practice

The activities in 2025 did not stand alone, but were part of an integrated approach. Deliberate program lines were developed, each addressing a specific bottleneck within the field. Together, they form a workable ecosystem in which makers can develop, gain experience, and progress step by step.

Artistic practice & production

Within the electronic music industry, creators often gain visibility, but lack context, guidance, and continuity, making growth dependent on chance. In 2025, artistic presentation was therefore structurally connected to professional support. Talent stages, club hosting, and festival programming were designed as learning and working environments in which emerging makers collaborated with experienced professionals. Performances were part of a broader development trajectory, including production, communication, and documentation, contributing to artistic depth, professional experience, and visibility beyond the immediate scene.

Talent development & education

In 2025, emphasis was placed on connecting education and practice by linking lectures, Q&As, and panels to concrete work experience, bringing fragmented talent development together into a cohesive foundation for the further development of the Kult Funktion Academy.

Results

- Strengthening of professional knowledge and self-direction.
- Improved alignment between education and practice.
- Preparation for structured learning trajectories.

Community, well-being & accessibility

In 2025, the focus was on creating safe and accessible contexts in which care, recognition, and guidance were explicitly embedded within the programming. This resulted in sustained engagement, lower thresholds for participation, and stronger mutual connection.

Knowledge sharing & network development

In 2025, active efforts were made to safeguard and share knowledge through conversations, documentation, and collaboration with education and partners. Local practice was connected to national and international networks, laying the groundwork for transferable working methods.

6. Makers & Community

We work with makers and build with community. In 2025, the focus was not on the individual profile, but on the ecosystem in which makers develop. This community is not a target group but an infrastructure: an existing and functioning network of driven makers, crew, professionals, and partners that has already proven its value in practice.

In 2025, collaboration took place with 35 makers from various creative disciplines, including DJs, performers, hosts, and creatives working behind the scenes. They were at different stages of development and participated in activities across education, clubs, festivals, and community events. Artistic practice was structurally linked to professional standards and working methods, making performance part of a broader trajectory of learning, collaboration, and progression.

The community consists of makers, professionals, crew, partners, and audiences who commit long-term and actively share knowledge. It is precisely the combination of disciplines that makes this network a source of knowledge and transmission, ranging from artistic development and performance to production, communication, hospitality, and artist handling. Experience is passed on.

A part of the community contributes structurally as a professional volunteer core. These are not supporting roles on the sidelines, but individuals with expertise from the electronic music industry and the cultural field who take responsibility in production, hosting, guidance, and safeguarding social safety. Because they often come from the same scenes and lived environments as the makers, trust develops more quickly, thresholds remain lower, and professional quality is maintained.

Within the community, community leaders and international ambassadors also play a key role. They operate within clubs, festivals, media, and educational contexts, bringing up-to-date practical knowledge and professional standards. The international network is active in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Manchester, Buenos Aires, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Groningen, connecting local practice to international perspectives and networks that would otherwise be difficult to access.

This layered structure ensures that knowledge does not disappear after an activity, but is retained and further developed. In 2025, this community formed a stable foundation for talent development, social safety, knowledge transfer, and sustainable growth. How this is experienced in practice and what space it creates for individual makers is brought to life in the interview with URBI on the following page.



URBI
KULT FUNKTION x HOUSE ELEGANZA, AMSTERDAM DANCE EVENT

7. An interview with URBI

Kult Funktion Artist-Ambassador
Manchester (UK)

Hi URBI! Your story didn't start in the club, as you told us. Where did your musical journey begin?

My musical journey started early. As a child, I played guitar and piano, sang as a soloist, in vocal groups and gospel choirs, and I was active as a dancer. I always knew I wanted to pursue a creative profession. When I started DJing, it felt like I had finally found the creative outlet I had been searching for all along.

In Manchester, the scene is both collaborative and competitive, but most line-ups still largely consist of cisgender, white men. It has always been important to me to show that people who look like me also belong on those line-ups. Just as important is keeping the door open for others who look like me.

You left a stable career behind. What are you most proud of now?

I am proud of myself for giving up a successful ten-year career in sales to fully focus on music. I earn less now, but I feel much more fulfilled and I no longer go to work with reluctance. I feel like I have found my purpose.

I started as a DJ, but now I also host multiple radio shows and work as a presenter. In addition, I run and curate my own events through my platform Staple Music, where I always prioritize booking women, Black and Brown DJs, queer DJs, neurodiverse and disabled DJs, makers who are often overlooked by other promoters.

I am also a music producer. My debut track was named Track of the Day on Beatport, and my music has been played multiple times on BBC Radio 1. I also mentor several DJs, supporting them in securing bookings and refining their DJ skills.

Why do you see platforms like Kult Funktion as essential for the future of house culture and electronic music?

Kult Funktion is an essential part of the house ecosystem because it is led by a woman, unapologetically queer, and actively reminds people of the origins of electronic music.

We need platforms like Kult Funktion. During ADE, Kult Funktion's line-up was one of the few I saw that weekend that was explicitly Black-led and women-led. That should not be the exception, it should be the norm. Platforms like Kult Funktion help pave the way for other Black- and women-led initiatives to see themselves reflected in these kinds of spaces.

What do you see as the value of the connection between Kult Funktion and international ambassadors such as yourself?

The electronic music scene in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom is incredibly strong. I see this collaboration as a way to bridge the gap between these two places. There is a lot of overlap between artists in both scenes, and it is important to make that connection visible and to continue building on it. In doing so, we ensure that underrepresented makers continue to have access to the best opportunities.

What are your boldest dreams within the electronic music industry?

I want to become a touring DJ and be able to earn enough through my music and by being selective about the DJ sets I take on, so that I can do this full time.

In addition, I want to grow Staple Music into a platform where artists and DJs genuinely want to perform. The next phase of the platform is already approaching: a record label. There too, I want to prioritize artists who are often overlooked, and provide them with a foundation to build on and secure more bookings.

I believe that collective platforms should collaborate much more. There are so many brands and initiatives moving in the same direction, but they often see each other as competitors instead of allies. When in reality, together we are much stronger.

8. Audience & Reach

Stichting Kult Funktion does not see audiences as an endpoint, but as an active part of the cultural ecosystem. In 2025, visitors and participants acted as co-shapers of the context in which makers could develop. Audiences, makers, and professionals moved within the same spaces and collectively contributed to the atmosphere, safety, and continuity of the programming.

Kult Funktion's activities reached **over 4,000 visitors**, participants, and students in 2025. This reach consisted of a combination of club and festival audiences, participants in educational activities, and students within educational contexts. The scale varied from small-scale learning environments to large-scale festivals, allowing different audience groups to encounter one another.

The audience was characterized by strong representation of LGBTQI+, BIPOC, and female visitors, with many repeat participants across recurring formats. Through explicit attention to accessibility, clear frameworks, and social safety, space was created for engagement, exchange, and progression from audience member to active participant within the ecosystem.

9. Organization & Governance

The organization operates within a clear structure in which artistic leadership, execution, oversight, and advisory functions are distinctly separated. This separation creates space for artistic autonomy while ensuring careful decision-making and sustainable professional anchoring.

Board

The board of Stichting Kult Funktion consists of three independent members and oversees policy, finances, and the organization. The board safeguards the strategic direction, monitors financial operations, and acts as the employer of the executive team. Board members operate at a distance from day-to-day execution.

- L. Ammerlaan *Chairwomen*
- R. Oosterhof *Secretary*
- S. van den Elsaker *Treasurer*

Organization & project management

Day-to-day management and the substantive direction lie with the core team, where vision and execution come together. Project management ensures planning, production, and collaboration with partners, while artistic leadership provides direction, maintains coherence, and connects the program, partners, and community.

Advisory body

The organization is supported by an independent and multidisciplinary advisory body that plays an active role in safeguarding quality, integrity, and strategic direction. The advisory body is involved in decision-making regarding content, organization, and risk, and acts as a critical sounding board for complex issues.

Core expertise within the advisory body:

- Diversity, inclusion, and international cultural frameworks.
- Social safety, care structures, and well-being within creative environments.
- LGBTQI+ heritage, community development, and cultural anchoring.
- Legal frameworks, governance, and risk management.
- Program development, artistic coherence, and audience context.

The strength of this body lies in the combination of substantive sharpness and social responsibility. Artistic freedom is linked here to professional standards, creating space for growth without compromising care, safety, and long-term impact.

Codes & professional conduct

The founding Kult Funktion adheres to and operates in accordance with:

- The Governance Code Culture.
- The Fair Practice Code.
- The Code Diversiteit & Inclusion.

Organizational development

In 2025, the focus was on strengthening internal structures, clarifying roles, and safeguarding advisory and oversight functions. The establishment of an advisory body alongside the board contributes to a balanced and future-proof organization, in which artistic freedom is combined with professional responsibility.

10. Funding

The financial administration of Stichting Kult Funktion is conducted in accordance with applicable guidelines and is supervised by the board. The foundation is VAT-liable and applies figures excluding VAT in its budgets and reporting; VAT is handled independently and falls outside subsidizable costs. The 2024 annual accounts have been completed and approved. The board oversees financial operations, with the treasurer monitoring budgets, expenditures, and financial reporting. Financial administration and back office operations are carried out by a designated administrative officer.

The financial results for 2025 are provisional at the time of publication of this annual report. The final financial statements for 2025 will be prepared by an external accountant after the end of the financial year. Provisional financial overviews are available upon request to authorized subsidy providers and supervisory bodies.

11. Sustainability & Safeguarding

Kult Funktion does not think in terms of editions, but in continuity. Sustainability here means that what is built does not disappear once a project ends, but becomes part of a larger whole that continues to evolve. The foundation lies with people: makers who enter, professionals who share knowledge, and a community that carries responsibility. By investing in craftsmanship, mental resilience, and access to the field, development is enabled to continue beyond the framework of a single program. Roles shift, experience circulates, and knowledge remains in motion.

What works is documented. Working methods, safety frameworks, learning structures, and collaborations are safeguarded so they can be transferred and do not remain dependent on individuals. In this way, the organization grows from practice into a system.

In parallel, Kult Funktion conducts targeted research into its own sustainability. In preparation for the next Culture Plan, work is being done on a strategic positioning that does justice to both the practice that has been built and the role the organization can continue to play in Rotterdam. Not by growing for the sake of growth, but by making sharper choices about what is needed to continue building.

12. Reflection & learning points

2025 was an intensive and insightful year. It provided space for growth and experimentation, while also making clear where structural strengthening is necessary. The breadth and diversity of activities underscored that content quality alone is not sufficient to achieve sustainable impact.

An important learning point concerned communication and reach. Despite strong content, reaching makers, participants, and strategic partners proved more complex than expected. In an intersectional and culturally diverse context, communication requires cultural sensitivity, consistency, and recognizability. In 2025, the existing structure did not provide sufficient support for this.

It also became clear that building a community requires time and commitment. Not as a temporary gathering around projects, but as a sustainable infrastructure rooted in Rotterdam and focused on long-term connection. This calls for different forms of relationship management, visibility, and continuity, in which trust and reciprocity are central.

In addition, 2025 clearly highlighted the need for innovation. The next phase requires a targeted step forward in both organizational and artistic practice. Rapid developments in technology, music production, and digital culture demand up-to-date knowledge, flexible working methods, and new ways to reach and engage audiences.

Finally, it became evident that further growth is only possible when internal processes are strengthened and become less dependent on individual people. These insights form the starting point for the choices guiding 2026.

Additional reflection points

- **Capacity and ambition:** content growth outpaced organizational capacity, requiring deliberate phasing and prioritization.
- **Safeguarding knowledge and networks:** the strong role of key individuals highlights the importance of transferability and continuity.
- **Digitalization as a prerequisite:** the lack of a future-proof digital and community environment limits scale, accessibility, and knowledge sharing.
- **System logic:** the practice requires structural support, while funding is often project-based.
- **Care and sustainability:** intensive community-driven practices require explicit attention to mental load and workload.

13. Outlook 2026

In 2026, Kult Funktion deliberately chooses deepening and structural anchoring. Where the past years were focused on building and positioning, the focus now shifts to sustainably organizing space for makers who structurally have less access to resources, networks, and decision-making within the electronic music industry.

Our way of working is rooted in underground house culture and ballroom traditions in which LGBTQI+, BIPOC, and female creators not only create, but also care for one another, share knowledge, and take collective responsibility. This culture of mutual support and care is not an aesthetic reference, but the foundation of our organization and programming.

In 2026, we invest in:

- Sustainable talent development trajectories.
- International knowledge exchange around House heritage.
- Strengthening and deepening (inter)national networks of partners, mentors, and cultural institutions.
- Further professionalization of governance and organization.
- Research into the structural sustainability of our working and programming spaces.

The coming period is focused on safeguarding: how do we ensure that what has been built becomes structural? This requires financial stability, clear collaboration structures, and a solid organizational foundation. Kult Funktion positions itself as an infrastructure that organizes access, transfers knowledge, and creates sustainable perspectives for makers.

What started in Rotterdam from conviction will, in 2026, be further developed into a lasting structure: visible, supported, and embedded within the cultural ecosystem.

Thus adopted and signed on behalf of the board
Foundation Kult Funktion,

Linda Ammerlaan
Chairwomen
Rotterdam, 13 januari 2025

Linda Ammerlaan



HOAX LEBEAU
MA'DAM INVITES x KULT FUNKTION A'DAM TOWER - AMSTERDAM
PRIDE